

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2726

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 00085

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IZ

SUBJ: GRANTING OF GENERAL'S RANK TO SADDAM HUYQEIN

REF: STATE 010554

1. SADDAM HUSSEIN WAS GIVEN RANK OF GENERAL EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1973
BY REPUBLICAN DECREE NO. 3 DATED JAN 5, 1976.

2. WE INTERPRETED THIS ACTION AS FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF SADDAM'S
GENERALLY RECOGNIZED POSITION AS HEIR APPARENT TO PRESIDENT BKR.
SINCE SADDAM ROSE TO POWER THROUGH THE CIVILIAN RANKS OF THE BAATH
PARTY, HE PROBABLY FELT A NEED FOR SOME MILITARY CREDENTIALS TO
GIVE HIM A BASIS FOR GRADUAL INVOLVEMENT IN MILITARY AFFAIRS AS
BAKR BECOMES LESS ACTIVE THROUGH ADVANCING AGE AND ILL HEALTH.
SADDAM HAS ALSO BEGUN TO APPEAR FROM TIME TO TIME AT MILITARY
CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS.

3. WHILE SOME CAREER ARMY OFFICERS MAY RESENT SADDAM'S COMMISSIONING,
WE DOUBT THAT THEY COULD CONVERT THEIR RESENTMENT INTO ACTION EVEN
IF THEY WISHED TO DO SO. THE BAATH PARTY, UNDER SADDAM'S
DIRECTION, SEEMS TO HAVE THE ARMY WELL UNDER CONTROL THROUGH
EXTENSIVE USE OF INFORMER NETWORKS.

4. THERE HAVE BEEN UNCONFIRMED RUMORS OF DISSENSION WITHIN THE
RCC OVER THE COMMISSIONING OF SADDAM, BUT THE MOVE CREATED LITTLE
PUBLIC REACTION. IT WAS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS A NORMAL EVENT,
COMPARABLE TO THE CEREMONIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE HEIRS APPARENT
TO THE THRONES OF EUROPE.

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